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## THE UNKNOWN BONANZA

By Lando Binder

Clem granned crookedly. "Mighty generous Clem granned crookedly." Mighty generous

the wild badlands stretching on ell sides. On the lead horse sat Clem Gordy, a western guide. The young men and woman behind him were Easterners, Hal Hamilton and his pretty

wife, Lora.

"Oh!" gasped the girl suddenly. "this heat is unbearable. Can't we stop and rest a while?" Hall terned with a frown, "I told you you

sunneurance Can't we stop and rest a white?

Hal turned with a frown, "I told you you shouldn't have come along, Loca, This is a man's game, searching for a strike,"

"I know," Lora responded miserably, "a

"I know," Lora responded miserably, "a worum is only a drawback and a nulsance on a trip like this. Why didn't I stay home where I belong? But I couldn't resist joining this treasure hunt." An eager look came into her man. "When that all men turned my locate.

oresiste number of super sour came unto see eyes. "Were that old may turned up in our family papers, it thought of the thrill of finding a leeb benname. What do you think it is, Hall An old gold mine? Or a cache of dismende?" "Who knows?" shrugged Hall, holding up they pellowed paper. "The old prospectes who make it out didn't say. He just marked the course to the spot and labeled it e "boname." We won't know what the strike is till we are

We won't know what the strike is till we get three."

"And if I hadn't come along, holding you back." aid the girl almost tearfully, "you and Come Gordy would have reached in before now. I'm sorry I insisted on coming along, Hal."

"Well, too lete to do snything about it now," Hal said, He colled to the galde, "Clem.

now," Hal said, He celled to the guide. "Clem, are we getting anywhere near the bonance?" Clem Gordy nodded, "We'll reach it today, I reckon." Hal let out a whoop of Joy, "At last! Lost

treasure! An unknown bonancs! Lora and I will be rich for life. As for you, Cfern, yea!! get the ten percent we agreed upon."
Clem Gordy's eyes were suddenly beady. "I want more," he drawled. "And retumber, you won't find it witchout me."

Hal and Lora were shocked. "Why, that's blackmeil?" Hal cried. "But you've got us where you want us. How about twenty-five percent?" of you but I want more yet."
"I had a hunth you couldn't be trusted."
Hal said angrily. "All right, we'll split fifty-

Hal and angrily. "All right, we'll split fiftyfifty. I supplies that's what you're holding us up for. You get fifty percent, Lead on."

up for. You get fifty percent. Lead on."
But Clem made no move. "I dea't want fifty
percent." I want one hundred percent?"
Hal gasped. "You want all of it? Why, you

Hal gasped. "You want all of it? Why, you crook, you can't get awey with this—!!"
"Can't !?" snapped Clem, pulling his gun and almang it at them. "Who's to stop me?

and aiming it at them. "Who's to stop me? You've got no guns, I'm going to cash in on the whole bosonans, savey?"
Hal and Lose clutched each other in whitefaced horror, expecting deeth on the spot, The

faced horrer, expecting deeth on the spor, The guide thet they had so hastly hired had turned out to be a greedy and ruthless badman! Clem hughed roughly, 'No, I won't kill you now. I can use your help. You're going to help me dug for gold or whatever we find. Then I'll feed you no the hourseit, When I resure.

with the bonaron, it'll be easy to explain how a couple of tenderfeet fell off a chiff by accidesp, leaving me in the clear."

Hal grouned at the cunning plot, But suddesly he saw his chence as Clem's bores shield a bit. Hall leaved off his own horse at Clem

a bit. Hal leaped off his own horse at Clemen harded him to the ground. The gun fell out of Clem's hands and clattered a dozen feet away. The two men lought now on the ground alugging at each other.

"Loral" Hell pented. "Get the gun. Hurry!"
Lora struggled off her horse end ran for the

gun. But in her haste she stumbled over a stone and pitched against Hal himself, knecking jim aidde. By the time Hal recovered, Clem had snetched up the gun and once more had the upper hand.
"This mounts Lora were thereby." I failed

the upper hand.
"Oh," meaned Lora wretchedly. "I failed
you, Hal. I'm still just a big nussance, that's
all."

"No more tricks," snarled Clem. "I'll keep you covered good. Get going." Later that day they reached the spot marked on the man. It was a desolate little valley with cliffs of white stone all around. Hardly anything grew. A tiny stream of water trickled "Pan that stream for gold,"-ordered Clem.

A nightmare followed for Hal and, Lora,

His ready gun forced Hal and Lora to obey, working hard under the hot sun. But no erains or nurrets of vellow metal rewarded them. "Where's the honanga?" muttered Clem impatiently. "Dig down and let's see if there are

any diamonds or rubies around. Nice to have you folks do the hard work for me." But this labor, on the part of Hal and Lora. vielded nothing more than whitish sail with an acrid smell. Cursing, Clem made them use a pickage on the cliffs nearby, but it was only

crumbly white stone, burren of wealth. Lors suddenly fainted, harvard and ween. Hal carried her to the stream and hastily accopad water and dashed it into her face. raviving her.

"I'm still a nuisance!" the girl said wanly. "Now you have to do the work alone." Clem was relentless. He made Hal search for a tunnel or a cave that might be a hidden mine. but nothing turned up. Clem screamed in rage finally. "It's all a lie!" he screeched, "The old

prospector who made out that man was nlumb local That's no bonanza here at all. This was all a wild goose chase!" Strangely, Hal began laughing now, "The joke's on you, Clem! You thought you were

robbing us of a big strike, but it turns out to be uttarly worthless. We've not the laugh on him. Lors!"

But Instead of laughing, there was a wild look in Lora's face, "Hal, there is tressure here!" She whispered "A big strike! Not gold or diamonds but . . ."

"Hush, dasr," Hal southed pitvingly, "Don't let it get you. Don't go out of your head, poor kid. Just be calm-before the end. Clem is so

angry at getting nothing out of this at all, he will kill us in revenge I'm afraid He's aiming the gun at he new?" For a moment, his face twisting savagely. the crooked guide seemed about to shoot them

"Wait! Why should I be a fool? I can still get something out of this. If I guide you back, you still owe me a big guide's fee," Hal was thunderstruck, "But when we report your crime-? "What crime?" interrupted the badman, grinning, "What did I seed from you? There was no bonanza! I didn't kill you. I only

down in cold blood. But suddenly he halted.

guided you here and back and you'll have to pay up. Let's go."

Hal furned in anger all the way back, yet could see no way of getting Clem arrested. As long as there was no bonanza, he had committed no real crime in attempting to hog it

all for himself. By bringing them back slive, he was safe from the law on all counts. And Hal would have to pay his fee. Far from gainand Lora were ending up penniless. What a But worse yet. Hal was worried over Lora

She had a wild look in her face all the way back, and refused to talk. Was she unbinged by the whole asperience? Had her mind cracked? Hal was sure of it when they reached town and Lors builed the sheriff, nointing at Clem-

"Sheriff!" she said, "arrest that man for attempted robbery of our bonanca!" Clem laurhed, "What bonanza?" he specied. "We didn't come back with any gold or silver

or rewels or anything . . ." 66 BUT we come back with this!" Lora snapped, taking a handful of white

grains from her pocket, "You two men were thinking only in terms of gold or silver and auch obvious treasure. But the real treasure is this white stuff, millions of tons of it, ready for the market. It only sells for a few cents a pound, but it's worth more than a gold mine because it's one of the most useful things in

the world." Clem stared in dawning comprehension "Treasure!" he grouned, "and I missed it!"

Cursing, he was led to jail, for now the crime could be charged against him. Hal folded Lors in his arms, "So you were just a nuisance, sh? If you hadn't been along

I'd have missed the bonanza too Only a won would have noticed that the big treasure wassalt?"





















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